DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 417 615 FL 801 218

AUTHOR	Frank, Marcella
TITLE	A Checklist for Teaching Comparison to Adult ESL Students.
PUB DATE	1980-00-00
NOTE	16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (San Francisco, CA, 1980).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Classroom Techniques; *Comparative Analysis; *English (Second Language); Language Patterns; Language Usage; Logic; *Phrase Structure; Second Language Instruction; *Sentence Structure; Syntax; *Vocabulary Development
IDENTIFIERS	*Comparison Process

ABSTRACT

A checklist for teachers of English as a Second Language who are teaching the expression of comparisons is presented. It is intended to assist in the systematic classroom presentation of features of comparison, with adaptation for any proficiency level. Broadly, it addresses how both the units being compared and the points of comparison need to be treated. More specifically, it addresses the treatment of syntactic, lexical, arrangement, rhetorical, and logical features of the comparison. Notes on the usage of these features, and the kinds of problems students often have with them, are presented alongside the teaching information. A student handout and sample class exercises are included. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse for ESL Literacy Education)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 417 615

A CHECKLIST FOR TEACHING COMPARISON TO ADULT ESL STUDENTS

(A talk given at the 1980 TESOL Conference in San Francisco by MARCELLA FRANK)

Comparison is one of the two most common logical relations used for communicating ideas, the other being cause-effect. For this talk, I am using the term comparison in its exact dictionary meaning - an examination of similarities and differences, although in more general usage we often reserve the term comparison for similarities, and use the term contrast for differences.

The idea for a checklist on teaching comparison originated when I began to prepare a composition for low advanced students that was communication-based. This text was to contain two units on comparison, each dealing with one specific area of subject matter. I felt that I could do a better job of developing practice activities on the sentence level and in extended discourse if I had a list that presented the various features of comparison in a systematic way. Because the checklist has a very practical purpose, I'd like to share it with other teachers for use when they prepare or adapt writing materials. Since this checklist actually is fairly comprehensive - it includes features features ranging from the lowest proficiency level to the most advanced - teachers can pick and choose those items that are suitable for their classes.

In preparing this checklist, I have taken into consideration both the broader and narrower features involved in a comparison.

In the broader sense, I included information about:

1. how the units of comparison - that is, what was being compared - needed to be treated
2. how the points of comparison - that is, what the units were being compared for - needed to be handled

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Marcella Frank
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

The more specific features involved in comparison that are included in the checklist are:

1. syntactic features - the grammatical structures used for comparison, including prepositions and conjunctions, and parallel structures, especially ellipsis and substitution
2. lexical features - expressions for similarities and differences such as transitional expressions for comparison, and intensifiers and approximators in comparison
3. features of arrangement - the order of the units of comparison in sentences and extended discourse
4. rhetorical features - organization and development of ideas, and principles of clarity and economy in the use of structures of comparison
5. logical features - logical requirements for both the units being compared and for the points of comparison

The checklist itself has four main divisions. On the right side of the checklist are special notes on the usage of the particular feature listed and kinds of problems students often have with regard to this usage.

The illustrative sentences in the checklist are related mainly to my composition unit on comparing two cities. The composition topic in the unit calls for a comparison between a city in the United States and one in the student's own country. In the checklist the cities are referred to as City A and City B.

A Checklist for Teaching Comparison to ESL Students

	Usage notes and student problems
I. Lexico-grammatical features involved in comparison	
A. expressions for comparison	General problems - use of wrong word forms
1. comparison (neutral term)	
COMPARED WITH (City A), City B....	Student problem - use of incorrect preposition. TO is used only for comparing unlike classes, as in poetry.
COMPARING (City A) WITH (City B), ...	student problem - dangling participle
IN COMPARISON WITH (City A), City B)	student problem - spelling of comparison
2. similarity	
LIKE, THE SAME (AS), SIMILAR (TO), ALIKE	problem - use of wrong preposition. Also, use of alike for like.
The problems in City A are like the problems in City B.	
The problems in City A and in City B are alike.	
SIMILARITY (BETWEEN)	problem - use of wrong preposition
One similarity between City A and City B is in size.	
SIMILARLY	
AS ... AS	problem - incorrect use of THAN for the second as
AS	
As in City A, there are many skyscrapers in City B.	

Usage notes and student problems

RESEMBLANCE (BETWEEN),
RESEMBLE

City A resembles City B in some of its physical features.

There is some resemblance between City A and City B in their physical features.

IDENTICAL (TO)

3. <u>difference</u> (contrast)

<u>comparative degree</u> (of adjectives and adverbs)

<u>problem</u> - using both the <u>-er</u> form and MORE together

_____-er THAN

MORE) _____ THAN
LESS)

City A is more (or less) polluted than City B.

MORE, LESS used adjectivally before nouns

City A has more (or less) pollution than City B.

But - City A has fewer pollution problems than City B.

<u>note</u> - widespread informal use of LESS for FEWER with plural countable nouns.

DIFFER FROM, BE DIFFERENT FROM

<u>Note</u> - DIFFERENT TO is British usage

City A differs from City B.

City A is different from City B.

<u>note</u> - widespread informal use of THAN for FROM.

DIFFERENCE

One difference between City A and City B is in size.

UNLIKE

Unlike City B, City A ....

NOT AS (or SO) ... AS

	Usage notes and student problems
IN CONTRAST WITH (City A, City B)	
CONTRASTING (City A) WITH (City B), ...	student problem - dangling participle
Adversative contrast	
,BUT	note - comma before but. But may even start a new sentence if one or both clauses are long, or for emphasis.
;HOWEVER, JUST THE OPPOSITE, ON THE OTHER HAND, ON THE CONTRARY	problem - run-on sentences. A comma is used instead of the semicolon. notes: 1. The semicolon may be replaced by a period. 2. Adverbials like however may move in their clauses, especially to a position before or with the verb. A comma after initial however is optional. However in other positions is more likely to be punctuated. problem - If however is moved from initial position in the clause, students may place a semicolon before it anywa
,WHILE, WHEREAS	problem - students often equate these words (especially whereas) with the adverbial however, and so place a semicolon or a period before them.
; City A has tall skyscrapers; City B does not.	note - A connecting word may not be needed for a contrast if both parts of the contrast are in parallel construction.

Usage notes and student problems

3. Parallel structure (for economy and clarity)

1. ellipsis (Omission of part of the structure that is "understood")

problem - ambiguity of reference

City A is as crowded as City B (is).

City A has many more recreational facilities than City B (has or does).

2. substitution:

with an auxiliary

Food costs as much in City A as it does in City B.

problem - the wrong auxiliary is used

City A can provide many cultural activities, whereas City B cannot.

with a pronoun - THAT (for a noncountable noun), THOSE, THE ONE(S)

problem - omission of the pronoun substitute

note - Informally, a second unit may be placed in possessive form - City A's traffic problems are much worse than City B's. (more formal - those of City B)

The buildings in City A are as tall as those (or the ones) in City B.

with THE FORMER, THE LATTER

note - These words represent formal usage.

3. repetition of structure words, especially prepositions

Food costs as much in City A as in City B.

note - The repeated preposition makes clear immediately which items are parallel.

4. nominals

problem - students may not make these nominals parallel

Getting a taxi in City A is as difficult as getting one in City B.
or To get a taxi in City A is as difficult as to get one in City B.

C. Expressions introducing the point (subject) of comparison between the two units

1. IN (+ a noun phrase)

   City A and City B are different in size.

2. IN THAT (+ a clause)

   City A and City B differ in that City A is much larger than City B.

3. THAT (+ a clause used as a subjective complement after the verb BE)

   One difference is that City A is much larger than City B.

4. TO (after the verb RELATE)

   One difference relates to (or is related to) size.

D. Intensifiers used in comparison

for similarities: JUST (AS)

JUST(AS) ... SO (correlatives)

MUCH - much the same as

VERY - very much alike
very similar to

GREAT - great similarities

GREATLY - resemble each other greatly

BOTH, TOO, ALSO:
Both City A and City B have many traffic problems.
or City A and City B both have many traffic problems.

for differences: MUCH) / FAR) MORE - much more crowded

MUCH) / FAR) GREATER - far greater differences

or GREATER BY FAR

GREAT - great differences

GREATLY - differ greatly

INSTEAD:
Most people in City A do not have cars; they use the buses instead.

VERY - very different

Usage notes and student problems

E. Approximators used in comparison

ALMOST, NEARLY

ABOUT, APPROXIMATELY

City A and City B are almost the same in size.

The population of City A is approximately double that of City B.

II. Arrangement of the units of comparison

A. In Sentences

1. One unit of comparison is placed in the subject and the other in the predicate

problem - pronoun reference

City A is like City B in many ways.

The problems in City A are similar to those in City B.

2. Both units are place in the subject

problems: pronoun reference

agreement between subject and verb

(Both) City A and City B have a high standard of living.

or

The standard of living in City A and in City B is high.

3. One unit moves - it can be at or near the beginning of the sentence or clause

Like City A, City B has many problems.

or

City B, like City A, has many problems.

B. In Extended Discourse (for clear organization and development)

1. Comparing for the same points and in the same order -
two possible arrangements:

a. First all the information about one unit of comparison is given; then all the information about the second unit is given.

Example:

I. City A (1)

A. Physical features (location, size, etc.)
B. Conveniences (transportation, stores, etc.)
C. Recreational facilities (theaters, concerts, etc.)

II. City B (2)

A. Physical features
B. Conveniences
C. Recreational facilities

b. <u>The information about the units of comparison is alternated</u>

Example:

I. Physical features (location, size, etc.)

A. City A (1)
B. City B (2)

II. Conveniences (transportation, stores, etc.)

A. City A (1)
B. City B (2)

III. Recreational facilities (theaters, concerts, etc.)

A. City A (1)
B. City B (2)

This second arrangement is usually preferred in a longer comparison which deals with many details.

2. Keeping the name of the unit as far forward in the sentence as possible (so that the reader knows immediately which unit is being referred to)

The streets in City A are kept very clean; the streets in City B, on the other hand, are littered with trash.

This order is especially important for the second unit in a contrast.

3. Within paragraphs, keeping the same type of subjects - either the units of comparison or the points of comparison

Unit of comparison as subject - <u>City A</u> has just as much pollution as City B (does).

Point of comparison as subject - <u>The pollution</u> in City A is just as great as in City B.

III. Additional means of making meanings clear in a comparison

A. transitions - for adding similarities or differences

One similarity is ....

Another (or a second) similarity is ....

B. examples - for supporting the similarity or difference that is mentioned

expressions to introduce the example: FOR EXAMPLE, FOR INSTANCE; AN EXAMPLE (or ILLUSTRATION) IS ....

These expressions are not always necessary.

IV. Logic (note - I am using examples here from my composition unit dealing with a comparison between English and the students' native language)

A. Units being compared

1. The units should be of the same class

The writing system of Language A is compared with the writing system of Language B.
or The grammatical system of Language A is compared with the grammatical system of Language B.

The writing system of Language A should not be compared with the grammatical system of Language B.

2. The units should have the same scope

If the discussion of the writing system of Language A includes the characters used, the direction of the writing, and the punctuation, the discussion of Language B should include all three also.

3. The units should be controlled by a sense of proportion

Each language should be given the same amount of attention.

4. The units should have the same level of abstraction

If the grammatical system of Language A is presented on a rather theoretical basis, the grammatical system of Language B should be presented on the same level.

B. Points of comparison

1. logical arrangement (if possible)

Related points should be kept near each other

2. ascending order of importance (if possible)

To demonstrate how I have used the information from this checklist for my text on controlled composition, I am including in this article two types of materials from the text. The first is a shortened and simplified version of the checklist for student use as they write the two compositions of comparison required by the text - one comparing two cities and the other comparing English and their own language. (The illustrative sentences in the student checklist relate to the comparison of languages.) The second contains examples of two practice activities using structures of comparison.

MAKING COMPARISONS [distributed to Students]

1. Expressions of comparison

COMPARED WITH
IN COMPARISON WITH

Compared with (or In comparison with) English, Russian has many more word endings.

Similarities

AS ---AS

Greek is as difficult as Russian (is).

THE SAME AS
SIMILAR TO
LIKE

The word order of English is almost the same as (that of) Spanish.

SIMILARITY BETWEEN

One similarity between French and Spanish is in the position of adjectives. (Give example(s) Another (or a second) similarity is ...

BOTH

Both English and German are derived from the same branch of languages.

Differences

comparative: ____-ER THAN
MORE ____ THAN

German is more highly inflected than English (is).

DIFFER FROM
BE DIFFERENT FROM (than for from is informal)

English differs from Spanish in several ways.

DIFFERENCE

One difference between English and Spanish is in the punctuation of questions. (Give example(s) Another (or a second) difference is ...

UNLIKE

Arabic, unlike English, is written from right to left.

,BUT (used only before the second unit of comparison)

English uses articles, but Russian does not.

,WHILE, WHEREAS (used before either the first or the second unit of comparison)

English uses articles, whereas Russian does not.
or Whereas English uses articles, Russian does not.

; HOWEVER, ON THE OTHER HAND (used only before the second unit of comparison)

English uses articles; however (,) Russian does not.
or English uses articles; Russian, however, does not.
Also, English uses articles. Russian, however, does not.

2. Expressing the subject of the comparison (for similarities or differences)

IN (+ a noun) Italian is similar to French in many ways.

IN THAT (+ a subject and a predicate) Russian differs from English in that it does not use any article.

THAT (+ a subject and a predicate) One difference between Russian and English is that Russian does not use any article.

3. Position of units of comparison (for similarities or differences)

A. One unit is placed in the subject and the other in the predicate

Italian is similar to (or like) French in many ways.

B. Both units are placed in the subject

Italian and French are similar (or alike) in many ways.

C. One unit moves - it can be at or near the beginning of the sentence

Like Arabic, Hebrew is written from right to left.
or Hebrew, like Arabic, is written from right to left.

4. Omissions and substitutions in comparison

A. Omission (ellipsis) - Japanese is an inflected language, whereas Chinese is not (an inflected language).

B. substitution - THAT (for a noncountable noun), THOSE, THE ONE(S)

The word order of Turkish is different from that (= the word order) of English.

auxiliaries - Chinese does not use an alphabet, but English does.

THE FORMER, THE LATTER

5. Making comparisons clear

A. Always put the same unit of comparison before the other one.

Example:
I. Writing system
A. English (1)
B. French (2)
II. Grammar
A. Word endings
A. English (1)
B. French (2)

B. Always make clear which unit of comparison you are referring to. Put its name as close to the beginning of the sentence as possible.

C. Connect your points with such transitional expressions as: One similarity is .... Another similarity is ....

D. Use examples to make your point clear.
Expressions for examples: for example, for instance; an example is, an illustration is ....

Sample Exercises - TESOL Convention, San Francisco
(from Unit One - Comparison of Cities)

Exercise 1.B. [one of the early exercises in the unit]

Write a paragraph about similarities between New York and Tokyo using as ---- as for each of your sentences after the first one in the paragraph. All the sentences will be about the topic mentioned in the introductory sentence given below - the high cost of living in each city.

Introductory sentence - The cost of living in New York and in[1] Tokyo is very high.

Information for the rest of the paragraph:

2nd sentence - food - costs - a lot of money (use much here with as----as)

FOOD COSTS AS MUCH IN NEW YORK AS (IT DOES) IN TOKYO.
or FOOD IN NEW YORK COSTS AS MUCH AS (IT DOES) IN TOKYO.

3rd sentence - price of clothes - high

4th sentence - apartments - cost - a lot of money (use much here with as----as)

5th sentence - movies and theaters - expensive

[1]It is advisable to repeat the preposition with the second unit of comparison (usually in or of) so that the meaning is clear.

Exercise 8 [one of the later exercises in the unit]

The following list contains information about the American city of New Orleans and the Canadian city of Montreal. Write two paragraphs of comparison based on this information. In the first paragraph compare the cities for the similarities you find between them. In the second paragraph contrast the cities for their differences.

The introductory sentence in the first paragraph should tell the reader you are discussing similarities between the two cities. The introductory sentence in the second paragraph should explain that you are talking about their differences.

Try to use a variety of the expressions you have already learned for making comparisons or contrasts.

	NEW ORLEANS (United States)	MONTREAL (Canada)
date settled	1718 (or, the first half of the 18th century)	1642 (or the first half of the 17th century)
settled by	a Frenchman	a Frenchman
national origin of many of the first settlers	French	French

	NEW ORLEANS (United States)	MONTREAL (Canada)
language spoken now by many of the inhabitants	French (creolized)[1] and English	French and English
origin of name	named after the Duke of Orleans	named after Mont Real (the mountain at whose foot the city lies)
location on the continent	in the southeastern part of the United States	northeast of the United States
area	365.5 sq. miles, of which 199.4 are land	63 sq. miles, on an island in the St. Lawrence River
climate	subtropical climate	temperate climate
population	496,938	1,017,666
commerce	second largest port in the United States	a major port in Canada
transportation	important rail center	largest railway center in Canada
tourism	very popular tourist attraction French quarter - Old World atmosphere big Mardi Gras celebration	has some interest for tourists blend of French and English culture Old Montreal - restored to the general atmosphere of the 18th century
sports	many sports activities midwinter Sports Carnival Sugar Bowl football contest on New Year's Day	Some sports activities

[1]Creolized - mixed with some other languages.